



NEWS

R E L E A S E

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For Immediate Release
December 11, 2012

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HUDGENS OFFERS FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Atlanta - Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner Ralph Hudgens urges Georgians to keep safety in mind when decorating their homes for the holidays.

"Don't let fire turn your holiday into a tragedy," Commissioner Hudgens said. "Use common sense when decorating to keep your home safe."

Commissioner Hudgens offers the following tips for ensuring a safe holiday:

Christmas trees:

- Check the tree for freshness. A dry tree is highly flammable. **Use this test:** Hold a branch about six inches from the tip and pull your hand toward the tip, allowing the branch to slip through your fingers. If the tree is fresh, very few green needles will come off. Also: Lift the tree off the ground and tap the stump on the ground. Again, very few needles should fall off.
- Cut about six inches off the trunk of the tree before putting it in a stand.
- Place the tree in a stand designed not to tip over, and keep plenty of water in the stand.
- Do not place the tree near a fireplace, furnace vents, television or other heat sources.
- Consider having a live tree, which can be replanted after the holidays. A living tree is much less flammable than a cut one.

Holiday lights:

- Buy lights labeled by a testing laboratory and check annually for frayed or damaged cords. On Christmas trees, use small lights that stay cool to the touch.
- For outside decorations, use only outdoor lights. Never use indoor lights outside.
- Always unplug all decorative lights before leaving the home or going to bed.
- Don't overload electrical outlets. Use caution with extension cords; make sure they're placed where they won't trip anyone. However, avoid running extension cords under carpet or rugs.
- Make sure candles are a safe distance from the tree, curtains, furniture, and other flammable objects. Don't leave candles unattended. Keep children and pets away from lit candles.